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ABSTRACT

The importance of cooperation between colleges and schools to insure that students have adequate preparation for college-level work is considered by the assistant vice-president of the University of California System. It is claimed that higher college admission standards would screen out underprepared students but would not solve the problem of underprepared high school graduates. Examples of college-school collaboration to improve the quality of education at the national level and within California are described. The College Board's Project Equality has brought together representatives of colleges and schools to define a basic academic curriculum and the expected learning outcomes in basic subject areas. Collaboration is also evident in the provision that about 500 high school students are allowed to enroll concurrently in college courses at the University of California. In addition, the Bay Area Writing Project at 17 California campuses provides a summer writing institute for high school teachers from various disciplines. Since the writing project has been perceived as a good model for improvement of students' writing, joint mathematics inservice efforts are also being initiated. Additional collaborative programs in California and other states are described. It is recommended that remedial courses need to be shifted back to high schools. (SW)

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COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS TO AID STUDENTS' TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

TESTIMONY

TO

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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Although more students are enrolling in college courses, fewer are able to do college-level work. Consequently, colleges and universities have been adding increased numbers of remedial courses to their curriculum, and that increased remediation at the college-level poses a threat to the integrity of the baccalaureate degree.

Between 1976 and 1980, enrollments in remedial writing courses at the University of California increased from 48 percent to 55 percent; enrollments in remedial mathematics courses in the same period increased from 36 percent to 48 percent. Even more critical, several University campuses are now offering pre-remedial writing and pre-remedial mathematics courses. Providing this amount of pre-university assistance is a costly drain on both human and fiscal resources. In 1979-80, the University spent over $5 million on remediation of basic skills deficiencies among undergraduates. These are students, generally, who are in the top 12½ percent of their high school graduation class and who meet all of the University's admissions requirements. An obvious implication of this situation is that the University's admission requirements aren't demanding enough.

It is clear that institutions of higher education are dissatisfied with entering students' lack of skills and knowledge and that they are determined to do something to encourage higher standards and curricular change in secondary schools. One way to encourage higher standards in high

schools is to raise admissions requirements for college. This, indeed, does send a signal to the schools. And a number of colleges and universities either have already increased admissions requirements or are considering doing so.

Higher grade point averages will be required at Florida State University, Oregon's public colleges, and Western Washington University. Higher test scores will be required at the University of Texas at Austin. Next fall, the University of Utah will require four years of English. And other institutions are giving consideration to similar actions. In California, The California State University system of 19 campuses, has this year for the first time adopted subject requirements for admission: two years of mathematics and four years of English. The University of California raised its English requirement from three to four years effective the Fall Quarter, 1981, and has this month placed before the Board of Regents a recommendation that, effective in the fall, 1986, the mathematics requirement be increased from two to three years, that the number of required academic units be raised from twelve to fifteen, and that at least seven of the fifteen units be earned in courses taken during the last two years of high school. During about six months of consultation with public school administrators and teachers, University faculty found very little resistance to the proposed admission changes. In fact, public school teachers are as interested as University faculty in finding solutions to the student

preparation problems. They see the impending changes as a needed device to help them refocus and upgrade the high school college preparatory curriculum.

However, merely raising admissions requirements without providing resources and assistance to the schools and without changing the existing teaching conditions and school environment will not automatically bring better prepared students onto college campuses. A study of their feeder high schools done by the Office of Student Research on the UC Berkeley campus last spring documents the woeful plight of present-day public school education generally.[1] The conditions in the schools cited by the study--and some of these are academically superior schools, which send the Berkeley campus some of their brightest students--are so shockingly sub-standard in some ways that even if the teachers in these schools do favor higher admission standards at the universities, conditions in the schools may make change agonizingly slow. Some teachers are thoroughly demoralized. Overcrowded classrooms, outdated and unavailable instructional materials, threats of school closings, and impending layoff notices do not inspire teacher productivity. Many teachers have left the profession. Vacancies in inner-city schools--particularly in the areas of mathematics and

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[1] Rose Scherini, High Schools Today: Overview and Implications for the University of California, Berkeley, Office of Student Research, University of California, Berkeley (May, 1981).

science--are either unfilled or are filled with temporary instructors not qualified to obtain regular teaching credentials. In many places, unionization has replaced professionalism, and strikes have polarized and embittered many who were once friends and colleagues. Top college graduates choose other professions. Further, in this troubled time, when schools are caught in the cross-currents of social upheaval and changing values, and when educational leadership is a critical need, school administrators are spending too much of their time on budgets and organizational administration and too little on standards and curriculum.

Under these circumstances, schools need more than higher admissions requirements at the universities to prepare students better for college. Colleges and universities must offer their faculty expertise and their campus resources; they must communicate a recognition that the problems of underpreparation are shared problems and that their solutions will demand cooperation and collaboration.

Developing such cooperative projects may not be easy, given the prevailing high school environments, the nature of the reward system for university faculty, and the cuts in funds for education. Nevertheless, efforts must be made. An encouraging sign in this rather dismal period for education is that these kinds of efforts are already being made. By fits and starts, in fragmented and disconnected ways, institutions and groups and individuals across the nation are

engaged in a variety of college-school collaboraations to improve the quality of education.

I would like to cite some that I am aware of both at the national level and within California. It is important that we share information on successful models of cooperative activities, and I am gratified that the College Board is presently preparing a pamphlet, 201 Ways Schools and Colleges and Cooperating to Improve learning to provide examples of such activities.

The College Board's Project EQuality is a ten-year commitment to college and school collaboration to improve both academic preparation and access to postsecondary education for all high school students. Consistent with its guiding principal, the College Board has brought together groups of school and college faculty and administrators to define together a basic academic curriculum, basic competencies, and the expected learning outcomes in basic subject areas.

Another example of commitment to joint educational endeavors is shown by the Southern Regional Education Board, whose executive committee requested the Governor of Florida to appoint a 17-member Task Force on Higher Education and the Schools in January, 1981. The charge to the Task Force was "to consider the linkage between our schools and colleges and in particular to select those priority issues and problems on which states, schools, and colleges must act jointly in order to strengthen education at all levels."[2] The Task Force set

three major pricrities for change--improving the quality of teachers and other school personnel, improving the curriculum at both secondary and postsecondary levels, and emphasizing coordination among the sectors of education--and prepared a total of 25 recommendations for action in the three areas. Wherever practicable, the recommendations include joint planning and collaborative action among secondary schools, institutions of higher education, state educational agencies, and appropriate businesses and community organizations.

College-school collaboration has for some time existed in programs that have allowed high school students to enroll concurrently in college courses. This experience, an important transitional bridge for high school students, is presently available in many colleges and universities. The University of California has approximately 500 high school students enrolled on its campuses. La Guardia Community College in Long Island has conceptualized this procedure in a unique way that seems to be working very well. In 1974, with 125 "probable dropouts" it created a public alternative senior high school on its campus called Middle College. The college combines high school and college experiences, allowing high school students to take advantage of all college activities

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[2] The Need for Quality: A Report to the Southern Regional Education Board by its Task Force on Higher Education and the Schools (June, 1981), p. iii. Available for $3 from the Southern Regional Education Board, 1340 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30309.

and facilities as well as to enroll in college courses. Enrollment has grown to 450 students. The college admits average to above average students identified as those who will likely leave high school before they are graduated. It provides for them an innovative program that includes "flexible pacing, broad curriculum options, service-oriented career education with required internships for all students, and a college environment."[3] In this situation, it is inevitable that college faculty and high school teachers plan curriculum together.

At Syracuse University in a program called Project Advance, some high school teachers serve as adjunct faculty to the university professors to develop courses for college credit which they can offer in their high schools. Both groups benefit from the shared planning. Students who complete these courses--and about 25,000 of them have over the past eight years--receive college credit at Syracuse.

In Ohio, where there are no admission standards beyond the high school diploma, the need to define clearly the academic preparation required for college success was keenly felt: Consequently, in 1981, the Ohio Board of Regents and and the State Board of Education jointly appointed a 15-member Advisory Commission on Articulation between Secondary Education and Ohio Colleges. Nine recommendations from the

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[3] Arthur Greenberg and Janet Lieberman, "High-Risk Students Make Big Gains," rpt., Journal of Cooperative Education, 58.

Commission focused on three areas: a college preparatory curriculum, teacher preparation and inservice education, and communication within the educational community and with students and parents.[4]

Two years earlier, in Wisconsin, a similar project conducted by the High School-University Curriculum Liaison Committee, resulted in the publication of Preparation for College, a resource handbook for college-bound students. This publication and the Ohio report both attempt to communicate to students and their parents that there are certain basic skills and knowledge students must have as entering college freshmen regardless of the particular college's admission requirements.

If there is a unifying thread in these similar but unconnected activities, it is this: the recognition that students need better preparation for college than they presently receive, that merely taking courses to meet a college's admission requirements may--and often does--result in minimum preparation and may even warrant remedial instruction when the entering students' basic competencies are assessed. It is essential, then, that college and university faculties define and communicate what is meant by basic academic competencies, i.e. what is meant by being prepared for college.

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[4]Ohio Board of Regents and The State Board of Education, Report: Advisory Commission on Articulation Between Secondary Education and Ohio Colleges (April, 1981).

In California, as across the country, educators are seeking solutions to this underpreparation problem. Also, in California, as across the country, the search for solutions has been sporadic and uncoordinated and aimed increasingly at developing intersegmental partnerships.

In the spring, 1981, The California Round Table for Educational Opportunity was initiated and first convened by President David Saxon of the University of California. There are six members of the Round Table: the President of the University of California; the Chancellor of The California State University; the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges; the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and the Director of the California Postsecondary Education Commission. They have stated publically their intentions to join forces to improve the quality of education in California. Their program of action identifies areas where intersegmental collaboration seems particularly productive: to promote curriculum dialogues among teachers and faculties, to encourage the development and communication of discipline-based competencies, to find better ways of identifying and guiding potential transfer students, to further the coordination of outreach projects among the institutions of higher education.

Concurrently, a faculty committee of representatives of the Academic Senates of the California Community Colleges, The

California State University, and the University of California were at work preparing statements on English and mathematics proficiencies and on remedial and baccalaureate-level coursework in the same areas. Viewing this faculty project as consistent with their goals, the Round Table encouraged the faculty in its work and promised to support the publication and statewide distribution of the proficiencies statement when the document was completed. Distribution is planned for fall, 1982. The statement on proficiencies identifies writing, reading and mathematical skills required for entrance into college-level courses; through appendices it adds sample student essays illustrating both unacceptable and acceptable levels of writing for college freshman and sample mathematics problems that illustrate the concepts and skills which students should have mastered through their study of the mathematics topics listed in the document. Required preparation in mathematics for college-bound students is prescribed by both courses and topics in this statement.[5]

The preparation of this document has been an impressive collaboration of expertise and effort. Once the faculty committee developed the statements in draft form, extensive consultation with secondary school teachers and administrators, with school board members, and with other

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[5] Information on the publication of this document is available through the office of the Assistant Vice President, Student Academic Services, Systemwide Administration, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720

interested citizens and educators occurred. Following this, the statement was revised and is now in final form, ready for reproduction. It is an important instance of collaboration, resulting in concrete specification of English and math skills students must have (as opposed to course units) to be prepared for college work. Prior work done by the Ohio Task Force, the Wisconsin Liaison Committee, and the College Board, were invaluable to the intersegmental committee in California. Already, there are signs that interaction between high school and college faculty is increasing to accelerate the process of reshaping the high school curriculum and lessening the academic gap between high school graduation and college registration. This kind of joint public document will definitely have an impact on curriculum changes in California; it may lead some districts to raise high school graduation requirements; it could generate more interest in establishing statewide graduation requirements. It certainly will reinforce the other intersegmental and individual campus efforts already in place.

One of the best known of these is the Bay Area Writing Project, begun on the University of California, Berkeley campus in 1974 and expanded now to sixteen other campus sites: six on University of California campuses; nine on The California State University campuses; one shared by the two systems. Central to the Writing Project concept is the summer institute, where high school teachers from a variety of

disciplines engage in intensive training, discussion and writing. The ultimate aim of this teacher training is the improvement of students' writing. While the success of this aim has been very difficult to measure, participating teachers have been enthusiastic about the experience. They, themselves, are writing more, and talking and caring about writing in new ways. These new ideas and feelings are undoubtedly carried back into high school classrooms. In fact, some of the institute participants become program consultants and conduct inservice training sessions at the school sites. There are now 80 sites in 33 states, and as many as 30,000 teachers have been involved in the project.

In conjunction with the Writing Project the Subject A Supervisor on the Berkeley campus conducts a two-week intensive workshop for local high school English teachers, to introduce them to analytical and holistic assessment procedures used by Subject A faculty to determine the writing competence of entering freshmen. Subject A is the University's pre-college level writing course required of students whose writing skills are found to be deficient. Follow-up strategies include a visit by Subject A instructors to high school composition classes to discuss the University's writing expectations.

The Writing Project at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) emphasizes inservice staff development, and project staff may offer simultaneously as many as five

workshops and courses for high school teachers, each course run by a teacher from UCLA's summer institute. In addition, the Writing Project staff give to interested 11th graders a diagnostic placement examination in English, which provides an opportunity for discussion of UCLA's writing skills' expectations with both high school students and teachers.

Another significant cooperative effort sponsored by the UCLA campus is the writing restructuring project being conducted with Banning High School and the Wilmington schools in the Los Angeles area. And this project is particularly promising. It includes teachers at all levels. A total of ten teachers--representing one high school, one junior high school, and two elementary schools--met for about a year in seminars with UCLA staff to look at the sequential nature of writing problems. The group developed a baseline for their study by videotaping classes. Together, with UCLA's staff, the teachers began to redesign the curriculum to introduce critical thinking and imaginative techniques at earlier states in elementary school and at planned intervals. They adopted the use of dialog journals as a device to encourage student writers. Out of the Wilmington project will come a new writing curriculum and source book for K-12, packages of student materials, and plans for dissemination workshops. It should provide a model that other colleges and schools will find useful. This project has solidified relationships between educators in the high schools and on the campus,

giving each group insight into the others' experience.

This past spring, the University of California, Davis campus instituted a consultancy program in English and one in mathematics designed to give area high school teaches and students an understanding of Davis campus requirements and standards: Specialists from UC Davis will disseminate information on admissions requirements and competency standards in English and mathemathetics, will administer diagnostic examinations, and will interpret the examinations and scores. Eleventh graders and their teachers from nine area high schools participated.

Because California legislators have perceived the California Writing Project to be a good model for improvement in students' writing, they have this spring a chaptered bill to engender the California Mathematics Project to be administered jointly by the University of California and The California State University. Its intent is to develop teachers' mathematics proficiency through inservice training. The bill establishes an advisory committee with members from higher education, K-12, and the business community. The goal is to engender inservice sites throughout California. Unfortunately, there may be no money appropriated for the project.

However, even without the legislative mandate, universities have initiated other joint mathematics inservice efforts. UC Davis and California State University, Sacramento

have joined to sponsor this summer a Northern California Mathematics Project, patterned after the California Writing Project. Mathematics teachers will attend a summer institute and participate in an inservice follow-up program during the year designed to facilitate diagnostic testing of students, to foster interaction between master and novice teachers in high schools, and to maintain contact between the sponsoring universities and Northern California secondary schools.

The University of California, Los Angeles has proposed a similar project--M21, Mathematics for the Twenty-First Century--for the southern part of the state. In some ways similar to the Writing Project, M21 consists of five components:

1. Summer institutes at eight sites in the Los Angeles Basin;
2. Intersegmental follow-up proceedings during the year at seven sites to bring together teachers from K-12, community colleges and UCLA to work on program evaluation, teacher enrichment, and curriculum development;
3. A Center for the Study of Microcomputers to offer classes for teachers and field trip opportunities for students;
4. Special summer training in mathematics for 40 teachers of other subjects;
5. Young Mathematics Scholars Program during the summer

for 40 high school juniors and seniors to enrich their mathematics experience and stimulate interest in teaching.

Early diagnostic testing of high school students is fundamental to student advising and placement, and to curriculum review. Both the UCLA and UC Davis mathematics projects incorporate this kind of testing. The Academic Senates' document, "Statements on Preparation in English and Mathematics," recommends that diagnostic testing in English and mathematics be administered no later than the junior year in high school.

One of the earliest cooperative efforts to solve the mathematics preparation problem in California began in 1978 when a group of mathematicians and scientists from the University of California and The California State University joined together to form a Workgroup to define competencies required for calculus. They have developed appropriate diagnostic tests and designed curricula to remove deficiencies identified by these tests. Since its origin, the Workgroup has added high school and community college representatives to its membership, has developed a precalculus test, an algebra test, and mathematics tests for chemistry and physics. Distribution and use of the test have been limited by lack of funding.

The Cooperative College Preparatory Program is a collaborative effort between the UC Berkeley campus and eight

largely minority-enrollment secondary schools in East Oakland to strengthen college preparatory mathematics. It provides classroom-centered teacher inservice, assistance in curriculum and standards development, classroom instruction by UC graduate and undergraduate students and faculty, management support for administrators and counselors, and workgroups for parents.

The activities that I have mentioned are merely suggestive of the kinds of responses faculty and administrators are making to the problems associated with students' transition to higher education--particularly the transition of poorly prepared students. There are many other cooperative projects and activities. The UC Berkeley campus has published a directory listing more than fifty Berkeley campus-school cooperative projects. We plan to survey all University of California campuses next year for more complete information on our activities. It would be helpful to have a statewide directory of intersegmental projects in California. A national survey would be even more helpful. I mentioned The College Board's planned publication of ideas for collaborative efforts. This will be a welcome document. However, it is not a directory; it will not include project names and locations and contact persons. Information on funding sources also should be made available.

At LaGuardia Community College, the Center for High School/College Articulation is presently preparing a report

based on a questionnaire it sent to 550 institutions to discover how many were involved in some form of high school/college articulation. The report will not describe the programs, but the Center does plan to produce an index of such information. Perhaps this will be the national directory I envision. It is essential that project descriptions and results be shared. I think a newsletter with descriptions of new projects and updated information on continuing or completed projects would be invaluable to both college and secondary school teachers.

I will conclude with four brief recommendations.

1. Inservice training must be done by the best teachers in the fields--by practicing mathematicians, writers, scientists.
2. Professionals outside academe should be much more involved in inservice training projects.
3. College teachers of remedial courses and high school teachers of comparable courses must be brought together to discuss ways of shifting the remedial curriculum back to the high schools.
4. Both university faculty and K-12 teachers must be given time and encouragement to work together to improve the quality of education if cooperative efforts are to succeed.